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OF UTAH

DEPARTMENT
OF HISTORY

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Feb. 12, 1985

Dear Mr. Wada;

I am a historian at the University of Utah. I am very interested in the relocation of Japanese Americans, and did some research recently on the colony you founded at Keetley. I have talked with Skip TABata about his experiences there, and also with Alice Kasai. Alice suggested that I write to you, and was good enough to locate your address.

I have taken the liberty of enclosing the article I have written . I would appreciate it if you have any comments or corrections. I would be curious to know what you think of the years you spent at Keetley now, looking back. In particular, do you think the hakujin community ever accepted you? How and when did you return to California? Did others of the Keetley group go to southern California as well?

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this. I was very impressed with the work you did organizing the colony. It seems, to have been very successful. Did you ever consider staying in Utah after the war?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sandra C. Taylor".

Sandra C. Taylor
Professor

JAPANESE AMERICANS AND KEETLEY FARMS: UTAH'S RELOCATION COLONY

Sandra C. Taylor
University of Utah

1942
"It was during the latter days of March of last year that we suddenly set the date for our departure for Keetley, Wasatch County, Utah. We left Oakland and on Saturday afternoon ... March 28th ... taking the route via Sacramento. There were twenty one people in our group and we traveled in two sedans and three trucks. The latter were loaded with our personal belongings and furnitures. I drove one of the sedans. That night we stopped over at a motel in Truckee, California. It was a very nice and comfortable place, (and incidentally very expensive), and we all slept well. We spent Sunday night at a motor court in Winnemucca, Nevada. I still remember that we had dinner at a Chop Suey place in that town and they charged us fifteen cents for a small dish (not a bowl, mind you) of rice ... and each of us ate two to three (and even four) dishes of them too."¹

Masao Edward Tsujimoto, the author of this statement, was a young man when he and a group of Japanese Americans set out from the Bay Area to farm a valley in the high Wasatch mountains east of Salt Lake City in early March, 1942. They were part of a migration of nearly five thousand people who, prompted by the Army's "encouragement" of Japanese resettlement in areas east of the Pacific Coast, attempted to find new homes. Voluntary resettlement was a fleeting effort at solving the apparent problem posed by the presence of some 110,000 Japanese, citizens and aliens, on the West Coast. From many sectors came demands that Japanese Americans be removed from the coast because of their dubious loyalties and undoubtedly visible ethnicity -- an inescapable reminder of the countenances of the enemy that had struck without warning and destroyed the heart of America's Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor. Few were successful in their attempts to move. Hostility along their travel routes forced many to sleep in their cars and made them desperate for gasoline. Others succeeded in leaving California and crossing Nevada, but were unsuccessful in finding new residences and livelihoods in the states of the intermountain west. Most eventually returned to the West Coast to await relocation to the camps.

One small group that did succeed, in most unusual circumstances, was a little colony at Keetley, Utah. Its story is to be found in fleeting references in local papers, but its real chronicler is Masao Edward Tsujimoto, who wrote a lengthy

¹Masao Edward Tsujimoto, "A Letter to Ophelia about Keetley Farms," manuscript dated 1943 in the Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Study, The Bancroft Library, University of California. (Hereafter cited as Tsujimoto, "Letter to Ophelia.")

document about the group's experiences the first year at Keetley as a letter to a fictitious friend, Ophelia, supposedly a resident of the relocation center at Heart Mountain, Wyoming. One must infer Tsujimoto's purpose in writing the letter: while he does not tell us to whom the letter, in reality a forty-page narrative, was addressed, he must have wanted his friends in camps outside Utah to know of his experiences, and he may well have intended that history know too. The document did indeed become part of the Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Study, a research project conducted at the University of California during relocation itself.

In order to analyze the success of the Keetley settlement in the light of the overall failure of voluntary relocation one must set its story in the context of World War II. The shock waves of the disaster at Pearl Harbor quickly reached the many communities of Nikkei, people of Japanese ancestry, who had settled on the West Coast of the United States since the turn of the century. Set apart by their ethnicity, perennial victims of discrimination and prejudice, the Japanese Americans had accepted their inferior status and had worked hard to establish a foothold in the country. They excelled at agriculture, especially small truck gardens, which they made productive even in the most barren of soils. Their very success prompted the jealousy of their neighbors, but despite legislation that had sought to prohibit aliens from owning land in California, the Issei and their American-born offspring, the Nisei, had succeeded in carving a place for themselves.

The war disrupted all that. Although initial fears of the Nikkei that they would be blamed and persecuted for Pearl Harbor were not realized in December, 1941, pressure for action against them began to build in the early months of 1942 despite the findings of the secret Munson Report. It related the results of an investigation commissioned by the State Department to determine the loyalty of Japanese residents of the West Coast and Hawaii, and concluded that "there is no Japanese problem" -- the people were loyal.² Despite this, what Roger Daniels has termed "the myth of military necessity" soon prevailed, becoming a cover for American racism, and the wheels were set in motion for the largest peacetime movement of peoples by the federal government in American history.³ ???

Despite the objections of the Department of Justice, the military forced the decision to evacuate Japanese Americans. Lieutenant General J. L. DeWitt, in command of the Western Defense Command, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy, Provost Marshall Major General Allen W. Gullion, and Major Karl R. Bendetsen were the major villains of the piece, but it was

²Michi Weglyn, Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps (New York: Morrow Guill, 1976), pp. 33-34.

³Roger Daniels, Concentration Camps USA: Japanese Americans and World War II (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), p. 71.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt who issued the infamous Executive Order 9066 which authorized relocation. The order was made public on February 20, 1942.⁴

Congress facilitated implementation, complementing the executive order with Public Law 503. DeWitt proceeded to carry out his task by ordering the exclusion of all people of Japanese origin, aliens and citizens, from the West Coast. At first they were ordered out of an extensive coastal strip deemed "prohibited." Many took refuge in interior communities, from which they would soon be ousted again. DeWitt then proclaimed the existence of two extensive areas along the coast, Military Areas 1 and 2, which encompassed the western halves of Washington, Oregon, and California, and the southern half of Arizona. Although no orders for mass evacuation were given at this time, the Western Defense Command encouraged Japanese to move from Military Area No. 1 and the California portion of Military Area No. 2. DeWitt ordered Bendetsen to "employ all appropriate means to encourage voluntary migration."⁵ Thus, by the first week of March, 1942, the stimulus had been provided for resettlement -- with virtually no governmental machinery set in place to expedite it.

The numbers of those who attempted to move has been determined by the change of address cards that were required of those leaving the two military areas after March 2. According to the findings of the Commission on Wartime Internment and Relocation of Civilians, 2,005 moved between March 2 and 27, and between March 27 and 29, when the voluntary phase ended, about 2,500 more cards were filed. DeWitt said that although over 10,000 announced their intentions of moving, only 4,889 actually did. The Commission found that of those, 1,963 went to Colorado, 1,519 to Utah, 305 to Idaho, 208 to eastern Washington, and the rest elsewhere.⁶ However, for most such action was an impossibility; they could not arrange their personal affairs fast enough, they lacked the funds to move on their own, and they did not know where to go, especially when they were overwhelmed by

⁴Jacobus tenBroek, Edward N. Barnhart, and Floyd W. Matson, Prejudice, War and the Constitution (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Univ. of California Press, 1954, reprinted 1975), pp. 103 - 113. See also The Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, Personal Justice Denied (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1982), pp.93-94, 101-104.

⁵U. S. Army, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, Final Report: Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, 1942 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943), p.41, as cited in tenBroek, Prejudice, p. 118.

⁶Personal Justice Denied, p. 104.

rumors of local hostility or even mob violence.⁷ Amid growing uncertainty and fear most elected to wait for the government's next steps, which would be a curfew, the prohibition of travel after March 29, and then the "round up" of 110,000 people into assembly centers and from there to the ten relocation camps in the interior.

The situation in Utah was similar to the other intermountain west states. There was a small Japanese population in the state, dating as far back as the census of 1890. The first residents had come to work in the sugar beet industry, on the railroad, and in the coal and copper mines. Some came as converts to the Mormon faith. By 1910 most of the two thousand Japanese worked in the sugar beet industry, although many still worked in the coal mines of Carbon County. After the agricultural depression of the 1920s devastated the sugar beet industry, most Nikkei switched to truck farming and fruit raising, and gradually some people moved to the cities. The census of 1940 revealed a decline of nearly a thousand Japanese from the previous decade's high of 3,269; economic instability had forced many to return to the West Coast.⁸ The Japanese community in Utah had many of the characteristics of minority settlements elsewhere: it was self-contained and self-sufficient, with its own places of worship, shops, and restaurants. If it did not melt into the predominantly Mormon culture around it, neither did it cause friction. In fact, Japanese converts had their own ward.

The war and voluntary relocation brought Utah's attention to the "Japanese problem." Executive Order 9066 was popular around the country, and Utah was no exception. As historian Leonard Arrington has noted, Utah was not free from discrimination, but it did seem to have avoided the outright hostility that prevailed in California.⁹ To Utahns Japanese Americans were "Japs," and while the local community was tolerated, newcomers from the coast were not particularly welcome. Certainly individuals had been accepted and liked in the communities where they resided, and white residents regretted the impact of the war's dislocations on them.

For example, the Park City Record noted on March 5, 1942, the suicide of one Ike Kow, who succumbed to carbon monoxide poisoning when he was dismissed from his job as a section foreman

⁷U.S. Department of the Interior, War Relocation Authority, WRA: A Story of Human Conservation (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 26.

⁸Mamoru Iga, "Acculturation of Japanese Population in Davis County, Utah," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1955; Leonard Arrington, "Utah's Ambiguous Reception: The Relocated Japanese Americans," in Roger Daniels, Harry H. L. Kitano, and Sandra C. Taylor, Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, forthcoming).

⁹Arrington, "Utah's Ambiguous Reception."

on the railroad, a position he, an Issei, had held for 35 years. The paper noted that he had left his automobile to his steadfast housekeeper, and commented that he was "held in high esteem by the railroad fraternity in Park City."¹⁰

Nevertheless, several thousand Japanese from the coast did come to Utah, either passing through on their way further east or seeking homes there. Even though they met signs saying "No Japs Wanted Here," they persisted. Some got help from the Salt Lake Japanese community, others did not.¹¹ Of those who settled in Utah, the largest number joined the "Nihonmachi," or Japan town, of Salt Lake City, but it was the tiny settlement of Keetley, midway between Heber City and Park City in the Wasatch mountains, which became a wartime home to the largest single group to resettle anywhere outside the West Coast.

Keetley itself was typical of the small towns that dotted the mining districts of Utah.¹² It had begun as a mining shaft, the portage of a drainage tunnel from the Park City Mining District. When rancher George A. Fisher built a town at the site of the Park Utah mine in 1923, he named it after John B. (Jack) Keetley, the supervisor of the drain tunnel project and a former pony express rider. Fisher, appropriately enough, became Keetley's mayor. Life in the small settlement revolved around the mines, for the area was rich in silver, lead and zinc. Fisher's fields were also fertile, and water from the drain tunnel was available for irrigation. The Union Pacific railroad built a line to the town, and with this stimulus population grew, reaching a high of between five and six hundred in the late 1920s. Fisher himself built five homes and an apartment house for the miners. However, the depression of the 1930s hit the mining industry hard and the town began to decline. Soon it settled into a modest existence, its hundred or so residents profiting from their location on Highway 40, a major interstate route.¹²

When the United States entered the second World War the people of Utah quickly felt its impact. They followed the battles and also observed the movement for relocation of the Japanese on the West Coast. While Utah Mormons had not been the Japanophobes that their fellow citizens on the West Coast had been, they were as patriotic as other Americans, and they shared the suspicions of the coast about the loyalties of Japanese Americans. In addition, the Mormons had always been chary of in-migrations of

¹⁰Park City Record, March 5, 1942.

¹¹Helen Z. Papanikolas and Alice Kasai, "Japanese Life in Utah," Peoples of Utah (Salt Lake City, Utah State Historical Society, 1976), edited by Helen Z. Papanikolas, p. 353.

¹²Leslie S. Raty, Under Wasatch Skies: A History of Wasatch County, 1858- 1900 (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1954), pp. 30 - 32; Wasatch County Daughters of Utah Pioneers, How Beautiful Upon the Mountains (Salt Lake City, Deseret News Press, 1963), pp. 1109-16.

non-Mormon groups that might upset the homogeneity of their culture, and they also feared adding to the unemployment in the state.¹³ However, the war quickly brought a labor shortage, particularly in agriculture, and this was manifest by a growing interest in using voluntary migrants from the West Coast as agricultural laborers. In early March the state farm bureau federation met to consider the problem of local residents of Japanese ancestry who had lost jobs because of wartime antipathy. The Executive Secretary of the Federation, Selvoy J. Boyer, suggested that Japanese nationals from the West Coast and local unemployed Japanese could be accepted as farm labor if the state and the army supplied adequate "special policing."¹⁴ However, as the first migrants from the coast arrived in Utah local sentiment still remained hostile, the legacy of Pearl Harbor.

When voluntary evacuees arrived early in March, 1942, the Japanese American Citizen's League, a Nisei organization founded in 1930, attempted to provide some assistance to those who could not immediately find work. The organization voluntarily registered the refugees and worked with the Utah Welfare Commission to provide assistance.¹⁵ But even this group was wary, lest hostility toward the newcomers jeopardize its own precarious position in the communities of Salt Lake and Ogden. When in the succeeding weeks more Japanese from the coast entered Zion, the JACL became even more active. Its spokesman Mike Masaoka visited with Governor Herbert Maw to work out plans for assistance, and the JACL began to search for areas of the state where the primarily agricultural refugees might find land to work. Despite the JACL's efforts to ease the situation, tensions mounted, and a sociologist at the University of Utah, Elmer R. Smith, made an effort at harmony by speaking at a public forum to attempt to promote ideals of justice and fair play in the community.¹⁶

At this point relocation was a stated policy but no procedures had been announced; only the venturesome Nikkei sought ways of moving east, for most could not afford the gamble. Meanwhile word spread in Utah of Keetley Mayor George Fisher's unusual plan. Fisher, somewhat of a humanitarian, had met Fred Isamu Wada when the Japanese American leader, a prosperous food dealer from Oakland, traveled to Utah seeking a place to settle his large extended family and friends. Wada intended to visit Roosevelt, in Duchesne County, whose residents had expressed some interest in obtaining Japanese farmers to work the land. On his way through the mountains Wada met Fisher, who encouraged him to bring his group to live and work on Fisher's ranch in

¹³Arrington, "Utah's Ambiguous Reception."

¹⁴Deseret News, March 3, 1942.

¹⁵Deseret News, March 6, 1942.

¹⁶Deseret News, March 17 and 18, 1942.

Keetley. Wada traveled on to Duchesne, but concluded that although the reception he received there was very hospitable, the town's location was too remote from the railroad to provide access to markets. He returned to Keetley and struck a deal with Fisher. He gave Fisher a down payment of \$500 on a lease of his lands, and the mayor agreed to visit the Bay Area to see how Wada's neighbors viewed him.. If Fisher were still enthusiastic, Wada would then lease 3800 acres and move his family and friends to Keetley.¹⁷

When the news of Fisher's offer reached the residents of Wasatch and Summit counties they were shocked.¹⁸ Even before the announcement of Fisher's Keetley project county officials had expressed their opposition to the arrival of any west coast Japanese, and the news was received in Park City with unanimous opposition. The members of the city council passed a resolution condemning Fisher's offer: "If twenty-five or thirty Japanese families were brought into this district, in a short period living standards will be lowered ... Since we are at war with Japan this would cause much dissension among the citizens of this community ...". The good citizens of Park City went on record urging the governor to do "everything in his power" to stop Fisher's plan.¹⁹

Residents of Heber City were equally dismayed. They met with Governor Maw to voice their opposition to the movement of any Japanese, alien or citizen, to the state. Although Fisher had indicated that he would only accept "citizen Japanese", and that he could provide them with adequate culinary water as well as housing,²⁰ most local residents were apparently not appeased.

Despite this evidence of local opposition, Nikkei refugees from the coast were not totally unwelcome in Utah, as Duchesne's attempts to attract them suggest. The residents of that county still hoped to bring in agricultural workers, and the County Commissioner announced March 27 that the people of his county considered it a "matter of patriotic duty" to accept refugees. However, their isolation did not attract the displaced California Japanese.²¹

Keetley, however, began to receive Wada's little group. In last week of March fifteen families arrived, followed by a few more from San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, and Santa

¹⁷Tsujimoto, "Letter to Ophelia."

¹⁸Papanikolas and Kasai, "Japanese Life," p. 353; Salt Lake Tribune March 19 and 22, 1942; Wasatch Wave (Heber City), March 20, 1942.

¹⁹Park City Record, March 19, 1942.

²⁰Wasatch Wave, March 20, 1942.

²¹Wasatch Wave, March 27, 1942.

Barbara.²² Former Salt Lake resident Frank Endo was among the settlers; he brought not only his twelve brothers and sisters and their families, but food and goods from Oakland.²³ The one hundred twenty Keetley volunteers arrived just in time: on March 30 the army's freeze order went into effect. There would be no more voluntary resettlement.

Whatever Tsujimoto's intentions in writing his account of Keetley, he did not write a story of failure. His account of the Wada party's trek to Keetley seems to reflect the excitement of his youth; its tone is upbeat and light-hearted throughout. According to him, the residents had no troubles crossing the desert to reach Utah. Fred Isamu Wada (who was Tsujimoto's brother's brother-in-law) was purely patriotic in his motives for moving: his brothers had all entered the service, but since his family obligations kept him at home, Wada decided to find some available land on which he and like-minded Japanese could live and raise food, to, as Tsujimoto put it, "try to break all records at raising crops, without costing Uncle Sam a red cent."

According to his account, Wada had moved quickly to avoid their becoming "wards of the government," in his determination to go east to raise food for freedom.²⁴

Although Fisher and Wada emphasized their patriotic goals, a few local residents did not abandon their resentment at the resettlement. No sooner had the Japanese Americans gotten settled in Fisher's dwellings than someone tossed a stick of dynamite from a car at a shed adjacent to their lodgings. No one was hurt, but the incident had wide repercussions. It prompted Governor Maw urge caution; he announced that he planned to attend a meeting of the governors of the ten western states the following week in Salt Lake City to discuss the relocation of Japanese from the coast. Maw called the Keetley incident an example of what could happen if Japanese settled in areas where they were not wanted and had no federal supervision. Although he decried Fisher's irresponsibility in bringing Wada's group in without first gaining community support, Maw urged local residents to show a "humanitarian attitude" toward the newcomers, whom he called "for the most part good people."²⁵

To young Tsujimoto even this act of violence was an aberration. He reported to "Ophelia" that even though the local residents had not been anxious for their arrival, one family besides Fisher's had been kind to them; the husband, a naval reserve officer, had gotten to know and like Japanese Americans when he was stationed on the West Coast. To Tsujimoto the other residents' coolness stemmed only from their never having known Japanese Americans before. He told Ophelia that the dynamite

²²Wasatch Wave, April 3, 1942.

²³Papanikolas and Kasai, "Japanese Life," p. 354.

²⁴Tsujimoto, "Letter to Ophelia."

²⁵Deseret News, March 31, 1942.

blast and the one that followed it a few nights later were meant to intimidate them, they had persevered, and had had no further signs of hostility. In fact, he said, "as time passed by, we became more and more friendlier with our neighbors." He described how the Japanese boys had started playing baseball and basketball after work with the white youths of Keetley; this activity had led to their all been invited to the birthday party of a Keetley boy later. When his mother asked her son how he liked playing with "those Jap boys," he responded, "They're not Jap boys ... we're all Americans."²⁶

Instead of publicizing the violence, the Park City Record featured a story two weeks later about how happy the new settlers were in their homes. Quoting the Salt Lake Tribune about the settlement's origins, the paper cited Fisher's remark that "those who doubt the sincerity of the Japanese Americans in support of the war effort do not truly understand the situation... They are not only willing, but eager to help ...". The article stressed that the migrants had come at their own expense, and it closed by emphasizing Fisher's view that local residents had received them favorably.²⁷ It appeared that the tide had turned, and Keetley's new residents had been accepted.

Within the next few months relations continued to improve. The Park City Record reported that Mayor Fisher had addressed the local Kiwanis Club in late May -- an indication that he had not been ostracized for his Japanese initiative. Fisher proudly told the gathering that the Salt Lake YMCA had commended him for the fine work he was doing with "these people," and hoped he would continue since "proper understanding" was most necessary. The mayor of Keetley told the Kiwanians that the Japanese were certainly better off producing food than they would be "if herded in a concentration camp ... costing taxpayers a thousand dollars a day."²⁸ A month later the Park City paper carried a story from the Salt Lake Telegram which, it said, had run nearly a page of illustrations on the activities at Keetley, including pictures of Fred Wada with the superintendent of the New Park Mining Company. The Telegram reported that the new residents had had no trouble with their neighbors, who had accepted them with "more or less good grace." The Japanese Americans hoped to pay off their lease and to show a profit; their children, meanwhile, planned to enter the local schools in the fall. A flag flying at Keetley junction proclaimed the group's motto: "Food for Freedom."²⁹

At this point the colony ceased to attract the attention of the press, and we must rely on Tsujimoto's account, which reveals the residents' own perceptions of their reception and their fortunes. Farm work began in earnest, he reported, once the

²⁶Tsujimoto, "Letter to Ophelia."

²⁷Park City Record, April 16, 1942.

²⁸Park City Record, May 21, 1942.

²⁹Park City Record, June 25, 1942.

spring snow began to melt. They cleared the sagebrush from the land and dug out the rocks, then began to plant a large truck garden with vegetables, strawberries and hay. They began to raise chickens (which they quickly ate) and pigs and goats. But the season was short; snow would fall again on September 9.³⁰

Although the farmers toiled seven days a week, there were other activities too. The women knitted socks for the soldiers with the "wife of a very prominent Heber City physician" and they attended church services provided by the Reverend Edward White of Park City. After White left for Wyoming they were visited by Galen W. Fisher of Berkeley, a prominent Congregationalist who had long supported Japanese Americans, the Reverend Ernest Chapman and a Reverend Ota of Salt Lake City, and the Reverend Arnold Katsuo Nakajima, formerly of the Bay area. Some of the children attended the Mormon church in Heber City, where they learned the tenets of Mormonism and its history.³¹

As time passed the composition of the community changed a bit. Some of the men who had been interned by the Justice Department at the outbreak of the war were released to join their families; among these new arrivals was Tsujimoto's father. As girls graduated from high school they left for Salt Lake City to take jobs as domestics, and a group of about thirty residents left for Sandy, Utah, south of Salt Lake City, to begin their own farming project in the warmer valley. Occasionally soldiers on leave would visit their families at Keetley, including Tsujimoto's elder brother Katsumi, now a sergeant.³²

A further sign of the community's acceptance was a visit in late May of a reporter and a photographer from the Salt Lake Tribune and Telegram. They took pictures of the group at work and play. The June 6 issue of the Telegram featured a picture story of the group, and the Park City Record printed excerpts from it a week later. The news story recounted the origins of the colony, noting that the neighbors of the group had accepted them with "more or less good grace" and the children would attend local schools in the fall.³³ To Tsujimoto the pictures themselves were the occasion for even more good humor. He sent them to his brother in the army in Texas, and one of his buddies, seeing pictures of attractive women, asked Tsujimoto to arrange correspondence between them. The youthful author giggled over the fact that the soldier had picked a married woman.³⁴

The men of Keetley were enterprising. Not only did they farm and harvest the Fisher ranch, they contracted to work on a

³⁰Tsujimoto, "Letter to Ophelia."

³¹Tsujimoto, "Letter to Ophelia."

³²Tsujimoto, "Letter to Ophelia."

³³Salt Lake Telegram, June 6, 1942; Park City Record, June 25, 1942

³⁴Tsujimoto, "Letter to Ophelia."

sugar beet ranch near Spanish Fork, where they labored during the week, leaving the women and children to tend the Keetley crops. Ted Nagata recalled how hard the work was, but how much effort he put into the task to uphold the honor of the Keetley group and to prove to the others that he was not a young weakling. Six or seven men also worked on a seventy-five acre fruit orchard in Orem, where they raised fruit, raspberries, and truck garden vegetables.³⁵

Those who remained in Keetley were intensely busy during the summer months. Tsujimoto recounted how "every day white farmers came to Keetley" to ask for help with the harvest; although they were already short-handed, they helped out when they could. Even the young children helped with berries and vegetables. The crop was abundant, and the Keetley farmers not only supplied local needs and those of Salt Lake City, but shipped goods as far as the Topaz relocation camp. The hills around were leased out for the raising of cattle and sheep, and they kept milk cows, which Tsujimoto milked; the milk was sold to the Hi-Land Dairy of Murray, Utah. They kept the irrigation ditches free of weeds to conserve the precious water, and the boys complained mightily were about the deer flies and ticks. As fall set in they were busy harvesting and canning their crops, helped in the latter task by the Mormon cooperative in Heber City.³⁶

In September the first residents of the Tanforan Assembly Center, south of San Francisco, were moved to the Topaz relocation center at Delta. The Keetley community was happy to have friends and relatives so near; the internees included one of Tsujimoto's brothers. Keetley residents visited the camp many times. Tsujimoto commented only that he now knew what life must be like at Heart Mountain, where his friend was interned. Gradually some of the residents of the camps at Topaz, Grenada, Minidoka, and Manzanar who were furloughed for agricultural work came through the Keetley colony on their way to other farms for agricultural work.³⁷

The games and frolics of summer soon passed. Although many members of the Keetley group had been strangers when they came to Utah, they were now becoming close friends. But they were not without their own divisions. Tsujimoto told his friend how they had sent a "poor Kibei sucker" out into the woods with a sack to "hunt for snipe," and he stayed out half the night before catching onto the practical joke.³⁸ Kibei, educated in Japan, mixed no better with Nisei in Keetley than elsewhere. But aside from such jokes, the community got along well, and they were glad when winter came and the members who had been farming elsewhere

³⁵Information from Ted Nagata; Tsujimoto, "Letter to Ophelia."

³⁶Tsujimoto, "Letter to Ophelia."

³⁷Tsujimoto, "Letter to Ophelia;" additional information from Ted Nagata.

³⁸Tsujimoto, "Letter to Ophelia."

returned "home" for the winter. But no one liked being idle, so some took odd jobs, some went to work in the mines, and others were hired in defense jobs in Salt Lake City. The children, meanwhile, enjoyed playing in the snow, ice skating, and skiing -- new sports for the former Californians. Others played basketball, joining the Salt Lake JACL league. All the children attended school, some in Heber City, some in Park City. Tsujimoto noted that "here in Wasatch County the nisei kids get along and associate a lot with their white classmates." However, he noted that the group in Sandy had not been so well-received. A Nisei high school basketball player there was asked to leave the team "due to public sentiment." Tsujimoto commented, "I'm sure that no such incidents will ever happen at Wasatch High School here." As winter passed, Tsujimoto looked forward to spring and another season of raising "Food for Freedom."³⁹

The Keetley experiment was a notable success, all the more unusual when one realizes that 135 miles to the southwest several thousand less fortunate people of Japanese ancestry spent the war years interned in the Topaz relocation camp.⁴⁰ When the war ended, the members of the Keetley colony dispersed as did their compatriots at Topaz. Many of those evacuated, as well as those who had voluntarily relocated in Utah, chose to remain in their new homes. The 1950 census listed an increase of 1,183 Japanese American residents in the state.

About two thirds of the Keetley residents returned to their former homes in California, while one third remained in Utah, most of them in Salt Lake City. Skip Tabata had come to Salt Lake City in the winter of 1944 to look for work; he remained to do gardening and eventually got into automobile mechanics at Strong Motors. He courted Mary Yamata, whom he had met at Keetley, and brought her back from California to be his wife.⁴¹ Fred Wada returned to Los Angeles and became a member of the Harbor Commission.⁴² Masao Edward Tsujimoto returned to San Francisco, where he became a pharmacist. His sister Ruth married Harry T. Hasegawa and remained in Salt Lake City. The white residents of Keetley continued their prewar pattern of life, that of a sleepy little rural town. George Fisher remained mayor until his death in 1952; that same year the post office was discontinued when the postmaster of 28 years died.⁴³ The legacy of Keetley remains, however, testimony to the fact that Japanese Americans could overcome their grief at forced resettlement and live

³⁹Tsujimoto, "Letter to Ophelia."

⁴⁰On Topaz, see Leonard Arrington, The Price of Prejudice, (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1962).

⁴¹Interview with Skip Tabata, Salt Lake City, November 1984.

⁴²Papanikolas and Kasai, "Japanese Life", p. 359.

⁴³Daughters of Utah Pioneers, How Beautiful Upon the Mountains, p. 1116.

among their white neighbors in harmony and without racism even in the climate of fear and hostility engendered by the war.